

SUBJECT: Military Coup Attempt in Chile

1. [REDACTED] this Agency has disseminated a series of reports on coup plotting in the Chilean Armed Forces. This reporting indicated that military dissatisfaction with the Allende regime was increasing, but that the few officers who were seriously promoting a coup attempt were poorly coordinated and lacked a realistic coup plan. A [REDACTED] report indicated that the plotters expected to move at some time within the next two weeks.

[REDACTED] the Agency posture has been strictly "hands off." Those few coup plotters who requested any form of Agency assistance have been told clearly and repeatedly that neither the Agency nor the U.S. Government was interested in stimulating or supporting a coup and that no information or other assistance could be given to them.

3. The coup attempt was launched by the 2nd Armored Battalion under Lt. Colonel Roberto SOUPER, which has the only tanks in the Santiago area. (One unconfirmed report indicates that the coup attempt was precipitated by a Ministry of Defense order relieving Souper of his command.) These tanks surrounded the presidential palace, apparently in the expectation that they would be joined by the Navy and the Air Force as well as other Army units. The effort seems to have been very poorly planned -- President Allende was not even in the palace -- and it lasted only a few hours. This abortive coup will almost certainly strengthen the Allende government, providing Allende with a valid reason for purging the Armed Forces and possibly justifying new government moves against its civilian opponents. Increased government control of the Armed Forces would significantly improve the government's chances for pushing through its revolutionary programs and for perpetuating itself in power in the 1976 presidential election.

4. [REDACTED]

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